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Notes of the Month.

Holidays have taken the foremost place in the minds of most people during the past month, but some there are who take advantage of the slack season to hold conferences for the discussion of matters of interest to their profession and for social intercourse with their fellow-workers. Two such conferences have been held during August, at which some at least of the discussions have been of general interest. The International Congress of Medicine held in London, bringing together, as it did, doctors from all parts of the world, had a moral significance quite apart from the cure and prevention of disease: it was a practical demonstration of the fact that in science there is no narrow nationalism. More than once this note was struck in the speeches. Mr. John Burns, President of the Local Government Board, in a vigorous address on medicine and public health, spoke of the reforms necessary in the present period of disease prevention, and concluded by saying—"The chief impediment to such reform is wastefulness, and one source of waste—the expenditure on armaments—stands head and shoulders above all others. If this waste could be prevented, gigantic sums would be realised for the reforms waiting to be financed. The chief among these are concerned with the problem of poverty, and this problem will need to be attacked on an enlarged scale by removing the known causes of poverty, not merely by applying palliatives to its effects. It is not too much to hope that this Congress will help to hasten the period of international peace and good-will earnestly desired by us all, in which our only rivalries will be in commerce, in progress, in science, and in the art of healthy and pure living." Sir Thomas Barlow, President of the Congress, closed on the same note, and pleaded for international peace. "We assemble in Congress to discuss, without regard to race or country, various problems of medicine in its scientific application to the sickness and sufferings of humanity; and, that being so, surely it is inconceivable that we should go back to our different countries and make no effort to prevent the nations to which we belong from engaging in bloody strife."

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The other conference to which we refer is the Annual Conference of the Institute of Journalists. The news-

paper plays so important a part in the formation of public opinion that the presidential address on "New Forces in Journalism and the Newspaper of the Future" should be of interest to many who are not journalists. One of the new forces appears to be corporate ownership taking the place of the proprietorial system. Nine-tenths of the leading daily and evening newspapers belong to limited companies, with "neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned." The new system was doing away with many of the great personal forces in journalism. It placed enormous power that swayed public opinion in the hands of a few people. They could influence public opinion by what was published and mislead it by what was omitted. Greater power over the public mind should always be accompanied by a greater sense of responsibility. This greater sense of responsibility is by no means always present; party strife and international ill-will are too frequently fostered by the Press. The ideal newspaper, honest in its presentation of news, just even to opponents, mindful of its moral as well as political influence, with no encouragements to gambling, and no pandering to sensuality, has not yet appeared.

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The Essex Hall lecture on "Heresy: its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights," delivered by the Rev. Alexander Gordon on May 13th, has now been published. We most heartily commend this volume to our readers. Our young people especially would benefit from the careful reading of this masterly survey of progress towards religious liberty; it would strengthen their appreciation of the liberty they now enjoy, and would give them an honest and fruitful pride in their forefathers in the faith. Some most valuable notes and a chronological table are included in the volume, which is on sale at the Depository. Price, 1s.

He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires, and fears is more than a King.—*Milton.*

DEFINITE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

Paper read by Rev. D. J. Williams at the Sunday School Conference in Dunmurry, June, 1913.

MY plea before this Conference today is for definite religious instruction in our Sunday Schools. I ask your indulgence for the short time at my disposal while I attempt to develop the subject.

The ideal of the Sunday School is, or should be, the training of the children, with the emphasis on the religious character of the teaching. The Sunday School is entitled to respect only in so far as it is true to this ideal. The principle is plain: the duty of providing the child with the best and holiest guidance it is possible for elders to bestow. It supposes that this great object is ever before the teacher. It means that, however inadequately we ourselves have been guided in our early years, it is all the more necessary to train the young idea in the way which, from our experience, we deem will be the best for them when they have grown up. We have in our hands the moulding of young lives that have enormous capabilities either for good or evil. The Sunday School exists for the child and for the child's sake only. The moment we count on other reasons for maintaining a school, the ideal is clouded over instantly, and our motives are tarnished. We wish the child to grow, not as we have grown, with false ideals and commonplace purposes, but with a firmer grasp of the meaning of life, and enlarged ideas of its dignity. Probably none would wish to see the children treading so carefully in his steps as to imitate and intensify the mistakes which, in ignorance, or from want of true guidance, he committed. The usefulness, even the necessity of the Sunday School, is apparent here. If a teacher take the young children so far into his confidence as to draw on his experience, to warn them by his example of the futileness of many vain ambitions, of selfish hopes and unholy affections, then the Sunday

School will begin to exist, and we shall be edified by the sight of a living man or woman feeding hungry, inexperienced souls with the bread of life ; a true man or woman speaking true things to those who will hearken to warnings lovingly spoken in simple, unaffected language. Children are the best and keenest critics, because they do not consciously affect criticism. They will detect and respond surprisingly to sincere appeal.

That Sunday Schools are not always regarded in this light is certain. Too often they are understood to be mere nurseries for supplying the thinning ranks of church membership—items to keep a sect going. When this is the main object, and not the means of serving the children, you may train many zealots and yet make hypocrites and selfish beings of them. It is a favourite saying of Catholic priests, " Give us a child to train till the age of 6 years, and you can do your will with him afterwards ; we are sure he will ever remain a good Catholic." The priests are convinced that the earliest impressions count.

I quote this priestly view not altogether in admiration—as is sometimes the fashion among us—but as, to some extent, an illustration of the wrong use of the Sunday School, and the pernicious habit of making zealots and bigots of children in their tender years, rather than training them in habits of truth, justice, and love. But the priest's view is instructive as going far to show that the impressions of childhood are vivid and tenacious, and that early teaching has much to do with the child's outlook on life. It follows that definite views of religious truth should be clearly taught to the young idea from the start ; and if we are to retain their confidence and respect, teachers must give them definite truths to learn, put before them in clear, positive terms. The Sunday School should be a place not only of discipline, but of precept, where the young idea will not only be exercised in service, devotion, obedience, but will also learn the definite conceptions of religious truth which appeal to us, and are the live blood of our churches.

The desire to learn, to be industrious, to be useful, should be inculcated at home. Too often the idea obtains that Sunday School is a safe place to send children to be out of the way at home. Again, parents imagine that they are conferring a favour on the school in sending their offspring there at all ; that the school is indebted to them, as for services rendered, to be liberally paid for in the shape of treats, presents, and prizes to their hopefuls. Then again, the school sometimes is regarded as a convenient place for gossip, for bringing money to the saving-bank, for lending out novels, etc. Now all this militates against the effective work of the school. What we are to consider is the effect on the children. The young readily take in impressions, are quick to understand the mental attitude of their elders. No sooner do parents and others regard the Sunday School in any one of the aspects I have mentioned than the children will presume on that attitude, and regard their relation to Sunday School work in the same light. The result is, they are not as amenable to discipline as they should be ; not so respectful to the actual teaching as is desirable ; not so eager to understand the record of religious experience presented to them, and not any more inclined to the spiritual side of life than their unregenerate elders whom they imitate more closely than we are at all times inclined to believe.

Parents can do much to prepare the way for the teachers. If elders show genuine belief in the Sunday School, the child will respect it. If they enjoin the duty of obedience and application to the work, the importance of spiritual culture for the child's welfare, there would be a new-found respect for the Sunday School and genuine regard for the teacher's vocation. Teachers would then have little more to do than to impart knowledge of Divine truth. It is not sufficient for teachers to be in earnest, but parents, friends, and adult members of the Churches should all combine to exalt the value of religious training, and so create such an atmosphere around the very idea of Sunday Schools that there may remain no lurk-

ing suspicion as to the value and importance of the work.

A remarkable feature of the age is impatience of restraint and authority. The Sunday School, when it attempts to fulfil its mission, is under grave disabilities. It gets but poor support, and it is a wonder that it can show any results. Yet from its ranks are recruited the best workers. How to increase its influence should be the anxious consideration of all who wish well to the future generation.

It is getting more and more plain that the special function of the Sunday School is definite religious training. It used to be the fashion among us—at least across the water—more than it is to-day, to allow children to be perfectly free and unbiased, without any attempt to influence their religious convictions. The evil of such a course is obvious. In what department of human knowledge or activity is it possible for elders not to influence the children for good ? We do not think it is well for them to follow their own bent on the off chance that by their own instincts they will do better for themselves than we can provide. We give the best possible—correction, advice, and education—to fit them for their future work. But in the case of religious instructions, it was thought that children left to their own devices would arrive at a better conclusion than if parents and instructors impressed their own opinions on them. The result was not that children grew up to be more anxious about religious enquiry, but that they became indifferent. They reasoned accurately enough that, when parents spared themselves trouble on the subject, matters of religion must be of comparatively little importance, and quite an open question. The principles for which we stand are the losers to-day. They have not the same number of stalwart defenders as they would have if friends and teachers were not actuated by a mistaken, though sincere, notion of liberty in religious belief. It is surely the very caricature of liberty to neglect to teach your children your own cherished convictions when the chances are that they will imbibe the views of others who are not so disinterested and lofty in purpose as you are. Neglect to teach children religious truths in definite form only at the peril of finding later that they have learned them from others, or that they have followed someone who has biased them in the opposite direction. We should be at some pains, and even discomfort, to ground our children in the principles of religion as they have been communicated to us, in so far as they have our whole-hearted assent. However indifferent parents are in themselves, all agree that children should be trained in the way they should go. The effective way is for parents and teachers to be familiar with the road, and if not, it is not surprising that children will find it hard to seek.

And now, a few words of practical application. It seems to me that the spirit of the instruction which has prevailed in our Irish Sunday Schools comes very near the true mark. The Child's Guide and Christian Catechism are effective means in the hands of a capable teacher of imparting such religious knowledge as the child should acquire. If these two catechisms do not commend themselves to all teachers, by all means have them improved, revised, or brought up to date. Set your scholars, theologians, and, above all, your religiously minded men to work to produce such text books as will contain the religious knowledge you do require. The Bible, which is also largely in use, has, as we are all well aware, an infinite variety of spiritual experience without touching what is quaint, antiquated, of doubtful morality, or merely temporary in character, that it can be drawn upon by the average teacher without any deep knowledge of higher criticism. The large number of beautiful hymns contained in our modern Sunday-school collections can be largely drawn upon for effective religious teaching. They contain a variety of illustrations of Divine truths which intimately appeal to the child's intelligence and sympathies. To attempt to make Biblical critics of Sunday School scholars, or to impart adequate training in the vast literature of the Bible must inevitably end in failure and disappointment.

The children's chief assets are moral truths. They need to be imbued with righteous purposes, to acquire religious ideals, to be spiritually pure. You should help them to some idea of the spiritual uses of this world, some intelligible conception of the why and wherefore of their living in it. They require to know why they should live this life of opportunity, that it is not exactly for the sake of their future in another world, but that they may live so nobly here as never to be afraid to die. The genuine teacher should like to see his scholars taught so well as to attain, wherever placed, or in whatever circumstances, as a result of their religious training, "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." "The Word of God" is an expression which embodies the substance of the teaching communicated to the scholars. It is an expression almost personal in its significance to teacher and scholar alike. Something like this Whittier felt when he addressed his lines to "The Word."

"Voice of the Holy Spirit, making known
Man to himself, a witness swift and sure,
Warning, approving, true, and wise, and pure,
Counsel and guidance that misleadeth none!
By thee the mystery of life is read:
The Picture writing of the World's grey seers;
The myths and parables of the primal years,
Whose letter kills, by thee interpreted.
Take healthful meaning fitted to our needs,
And in the soul's vernacular express
The common law of simple righteousness;
Hatred of cant, and doubt of human creeds
May well be felt; the unpardonable sin
Is to deny the Word of God within."

In so far as the Sunday School communicates aright the Word of God to the scholars will it succeed to revivify the drooping spiritual life of our churches, and bring down on the members the abundance of the blessing promised to the pure in heart, who shall see God.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

By Rev. E. H. Pickering, B.A.

SCENES, INCIDENTS, AND LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS.

XXI. Jesus' tender affection. (*b*) *For the young man who wanted to be good.* Mark x. 11–22. *Memory verse,* Mark x. 21.

Points. (1). *Jesus refuses to be called "good."* Yet he tells *us* to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. If he, then, whom we think so good and perfect, refuses the title, how hard have we to strive to be worthy of it! But, like Jesus, we shall be much more worthy if we are modest. Read Gould's "Moral Lessons," 1st series, p. 61.

(2) *Eternal life.* The only life that is eternal is the good life, for good things live for ever. We ought then to strive, above all things, to be good. This alone will make us truly happy, *e.g.*, story of the king who wished to sleep one night in the shirt of a happy man. For *elder scholars* Wordsworth's poem, "The Happy Warrior."

(3) *Jesus loved him.* Why? Because the young man was *trying* to be good, *e.g.*, story of two little boys whose mother loved beautiful pictures. One tried to paint one. The other laughed, and said "impossible!" But the mother valued the attempt, and loved her son for trying. So God wants us all to be good. It is very hard. But He will love us if we try.

(4) *He went away sorrowful.* He was very rich, and Jesus told him to sell all his lands and give the money away to the poor, because he saw that wealth was a burden to him and kept his thoughts from simple goodness. But the young man could not possibly bring himself to be poor. Even we have many possessions, which, if not rightly managed, will keep our eyes from God. *e.g.*, Story of traveller who lost his way, because his burden bowed him down so that he could not see where he was going.

XXII. The story of Zacchaeus. Luke xix. 1–10. *Memory verse,* Luke xix. 5.

Points. (1) Zacchaeus, the chief publican, wanted to see Jesus. A publican was a tax-gatherer, and usually not a very honest man; but he was usually very rich, as was Zacchaeus. The rich, prosperous man was actually eager to see the poor travelling preacher, Jesus. He was wise, because a good man is the greatest of all men, and it is wise to look at what is good so as to learn to do it. Jesus is our ideal; therefore we must strive to see him. But where? Everywhere—where there is patience, generosity, devotion, purity, and truth.

(2) *He climbed up into a sycamore tree.* He was little, but got over that difficulty by going *higher.* In our theatres, halls, concert rooms we see better if we go higher, but because it is hard work climbing the stairs these places are cheapest. But to see Jesus, who is goodness, we are *bound* to go higher to get away from the crowd of selfish cares, impure thoughts, and unkind deeds. That is the best place, and the climbing is best of all, because it takes us nearer to God. "Forward! be our watchword." All good things are worth striving for. *e.g.,* Bruce and the spider, hare and tortoise, and Longfellow's "Excelsior."

(3) *Jesus looked up.* That was Zacchaeus' reward. He had tried to see Jesus, and Jesus saw him. It makes us so happy to be seen and noticed by those we love. Do we love God? How happy, then, to think that He sees us, and will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

(4) *Zacchaeus and Jesus.* See what the look did for Zacchaeus! especially when Jesus went and dined with him. People grumbled at this, because they said that Zacchaeus was a bad man. But Jesus' presence and courtesy reformed him, so that he gave back fourfold all that he had got unjustly. People who do wrong will rarely be reformed unless we visit them and forgive them. Elizabeth Fry even reformed debased criminals by means of her kindly visits to the prisons, and care for those imprisoned there.

XXIII. The journey to Jerusalem. Read Mark x. 32–34. *Memory verse,* Mark x. 32, "and Jesus was going before them."

(1). *Having completed his ministry in Galilee,* Jesus' next thought is naturally of Jerusalem, the capital, the Holy City. Shall he go there to face the powerful Scribes, Pharisees, and rulers with his Gospel of Peace and Love? He knows they hate him, because he has exposed their hypocrisy. Trusting in God, he decides to make the fateful journey. Draw a word-picture of the march.

(2). *"And they were in the way"*—very lonely, rugged, and unknown. So different from the roads and villages in Galilee they knew and loved.

(3). *Jesus was going before them.* A true leader! True leaders take the most open places, and go to and fro inspiring and directing. *e.g.,* Nelson and Wellington. Although we talk so much about being first, we find it very difficult to go first into danger. *e.g.,* Story of the Roman standard-bearer. When the Romans first invaded Britain they were so terrified by the sight of the Britons on the shore that no one dared take the lead. So the standard-bearer plunged bravely into the water, the soldiers followed, and victory was achieved. But who will take the lead against evil? If we follow Jesus we shall lead. Read the hymn, "Jesus, still lead on," New Hymnal, No. 182.

(4). *"They that followed were afraid."* It is nice and easy enough to follow in a procession. But when danger looms ahead! Jesus therefore not only had to lead, but to cheer and encourage. How brave he must have been, when all the while he knew that he himself was going into the greatest danger! For stories of courage read Gould's "Moral Lessons," 1st series, pp. 36-41—Leonidas, Horatius, Franklin, St. Paul.

XXIV. The arrival at Jerusalem. Read Mark xi. 1–10. *Memory verse,* Mark xi. 9.

1. *"The Lord hath need of him."* This is a beautiful phrase. Even the donkey is useful to Jesus. So are all those men, women, and children, rich or poor, wise or foolish, who do his Father's will. (*e.g.*) Story of the

tumbling monk of Clairveaux. He could do nothing well, except turn somersaults. Therefore he turned somersaults to God as being the best offering he could make—as it was, because it came from a willing heart. The Lord hath need of all.

2. *Jesus' simple entrance.* He entered most simply, in order to let the people know that lowly goodness is the highest of all things. He was a spiritual king, the Messiah of the loving heart, and therefore needed no gorgeous trappings.

3. "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" Those who loved him knew he was the Messiah, the king of kings. What a beautiful entrance it must have been, with all that crowd of lowly folk pouring out of the city, cutting down palm branches and making a way for him with them, and even with their cloaks. They could not have given him a greater triumph. Compare Luther's equally brave entrance to Worms. He declared that, even if there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on the house-tops, he could still go, and the people turned out in thousands to welcome him.

4. *Wickedness, however, conquered for the time,* and the great lowly Jesus suffered death. But that story belongs properly to Eastertime, and so we will leave it until then.

PRESBYTERIANISM.

Exposition delivered at the Installation of the Rev. G. V. Crook, Antrim, May 19, 1913.

By Rev. R. M. King.

IT is now my duty to, in a short and succinct manner, give you an exposition of Presbyterian Church Government.

We, being a Church, a religious body of the Christian faith, deem it a matter of great importance that the form of our Church government should be as near as possible in accordance with the ideal of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he did not organise a Church, left behind him suggestions for conduct and ideals of individual and corporate service. As Presbyterians, we claim that our form of Church Government carries out the ideals of the Master, and represents the truest form of Church government by joining together in that government both ministers and people. We do not claim for our ministry any hierarchical powers. Our ministers are, in the first place, men chosen on account of gifts, education, and an inward call to the ministry, who by their calling and gifts are worthy of being ministers of the Word of God and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are ordained to the charge of a congregation, not as priests, but as ministers or servants, who serve, help, encourage, and teach their people in religious faith and morals. Mindful of the description of a minister given by Jesus, as one who exalts not himself, but one who becomes humble and helps and serves others, our ministers have no call to lord it over their heritage, but by precept, example, and helpfulness, encourage their people to walk along the way that leads unto life eternal.

We claim that our system rests upon the practice of the earliest form of Church government in the Christian Church. This claim has been admitted by many leading historians, and even by bishops of the Episcopal Church. The Confession of Faith, drawn up in Ireland by Archbishop Usher in 1615, implicitly admits the validity of Presbyterian Ordination, and denied the distinction between bishop and elder, or presbyter. Bishop Lightfoot connects the Christian ministry, not with that of the Temple, with its priests and sacrifices, but with the Synagogue, which was a local institution, providing spiritual edification by the reading and exposition of Scripture. The first Christians were regarded, even by themselves, as a Jewish sect. They took with them into the new communities they founded the Jewish polity of rule and oversight by elders. The appointment of these would be regarded as a matter of course, and would not seem to call for any special notice in such a narrative as the Acts of the Apostles. It is generally admitted that distinct traces

of Presbyterian polity are to be found in unexpected places, *e.g.*, Ireland, Iona, the Culdees, etc., from the early ages of Church history, and throughout the Mediæval Church down to the Reformation in the 16th century. So it is only in a modified sense that Presbyterianism can be said to have dated from the Reformation. It is true, however, that the present organised form of Presbyterianism was fixed by Calvin in his institutes, but that was simply the fixing and systematising of what had previously, and from very ancient time, been observed by portions of the Christian Church. Under Calvin's influence, therefore, this system became the definite ideal of the Church government of the Reformed Churches, especially in France and Scotland.

The term presbyter means elder. Our system recognises two divisions—the preaching elder or minister, and the lay elder. Both are appointed for life, subject to their conduct being such as is proper to their sacred office. The minister is called or chosen by the congregation, and if the call is sustained by the Presbytery, and it is satisfied that he is qualified by gifts, character, and education to be a minister, he is solemnly ordained by religious service and the laying on of hands by the Presbytery to the pastoral charge of the congregation. The lay elders are chosen by the church or congregation from men who, by fitness of character and experience, are considered suitable to act as helpers of the minister, and to form the court for regulating matters of worship and discipline in the congregation. With the minister, who is ex-officio the moderator, they form the Session. The Session has no authority over the minister. He holds his office *ad vitam aut culpam*. He cannot demit it or be deprived of it without the consent of the Presbytery. In this his independence among the people to whom he ministers is to a large extent assured. This independence is necessary if he is to be able to worthily and without bias carry out his sacred duties. This Session forms the first court of the Church. The Presbytery consists of the ministers from a convenient district with an elder from each church, which exercises jurisdiction over all the congregations within its bounds, and among other matters sees that the ordinances of religion and the preaching of the Word are properly and effectually administered. It forms a court for the examination and regulation of congregational affairs, and is the referee in matters of dispute. The Synod is the supreme court in our Church. It is formed by the different Presbyteries, with their ministers and elders united for the purpose of rule over the whole Church. In matters of dispute in Session, an appeal may be made to Presbytery, and from Presbytery to Synod, so that such matters have full opportunity of being carefully examined and dispassionately adjudicated. Beyond Synod there is no appeal.

Presbyterianism recognises the early principle of the priesthood of all believers. All its ministers are equal. Its Moderator is only first among equals, and is honoured and obeyed by the brethren as such. As such, therefore there is no temptation to strive after place and honours, which form the easily besetting sin of most ecclesiastical bodies. Our ministers are not priests, but ministers. They serve their people in the Lord, going with them to the throne of grace, helping, stimulating, and encouraging their people by word and example. The priest is one who acts for the people, who is a mediator between God and men, who performs the sacrifice on behalf of the people, and believes himself to be of a different order and clothed with special powers. Our ministers, under the Presbyterian system, claim no occult powers, seek no pre-eminence over their brethren, are not a caste by themselves, but, after the pattern of Jesus, serve God by helping and serving their fellow-men.

Therefore, our system is truly democratic in idea and fact. It is a true democracy in its equal association of ministers and people, in the worship in the meeting-house, the government and direction of the congregation, the oversight of the congregations in the Presbytery, and the direction and government of the whole Church in the Synod.

There may be some who may say, what necessity is there for rules in the conduct of the Church? Human experience has justified the establishment of rules, that there may always be a clear understanding of the way in which things should go, so that all things may be done, to quote the apostolic phrase, "decently and in order." Rules are for guidance or management, and guard the interests of all parties. The rules of the Presbyterian Church are not the hastily drawn-up regulations of a single moment, but are the rules of custom and experience, having been revised, added to, rescinded from time to time, "broading down from precedent to precedent."

The Presbyterian Church at different times, as experience dictated, issued regulations. In 1825 the first Code of Discipline was drawn up and adopted by the Church. When the Remonstrants separated from the General Synod, that Code formed their Code till 1857, when it was revised and the first Code of the Remonstrant Synod was issued. A revision of this was issued in 1904, and when the Synod, with the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Free Christians, agreed to unite in one as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, a new Code and Constitution was drawn up and adopted in 1910.

These rules are simply for management of the affairs of the Church and congregations, and contain nothing that will hamper the full and free development of religious thought and practice amongst us. That freedom, with which the Presbyterian Church first started—freedom to search the Scriptures and learn what is the religion of Jesus; that freedom to follow out the teaching of Scripture and the voice of conscience to its end, is jealously guarded and guaranteed to every minister and member of our Church.

Finally, the Presbyterian form of government presents the ideal of a Church of equals, united in the service of God and man, none before or after, but all, ministers and people, moving together, onward and upward towards the throne of grace, all fellow-labourers with God.

CHARGE TO CONGREGATION AND MINISTER.

Delivered on the occasion of the installation of Rev. G. V. Crook, Antrim.

By Rev. T. Munn.

The call has been given and accepted, and as a congregation you have not only promised to pay your minister a specified salary, but also promised to support him in other ways in his work here. The "call" is a solemn league and covenant between two parties, pledging themselves to work together for the welfare of the congregation materially and spiritually. The minister has his work, the members of the congregation have theirs: different duties fall to each, and it depends on how you realise this united responsibility whether the work here of uplifting humanity and spreading Christ's kingdom of heaven upon the earth is successful. I want to say to you as a congregation that a yearly contribution to the funds of the Church does not constitute membership in its true sense. It is only a part—and a small part—of the obligation of a member of the Church of Christ: more important still is the duty of identifying yourselves with all its activities. You will expect to see your minister here at the appointed hour on Sunday morning—remember that he will also expect to see you. You will expect him in your homes in times of sickness and trouble, bringing friendly sympathy and spiritual comfort. He will have his trials and disappointments. Don't withhold the word of encouragement from him. It has been said that a minister to a large extent makes the congregation. I think it would be just as true to say that the congregation makes the minister. If you show him you respect him, strengthening his hands in every good work, then he will have confidence in himself and in you, and be able to give of his best; but if there is laxity on your part in the matter of regular attendance and carelessness toward the best welfare of the Church, he will become disheartened and lose

that zest in his labour, which a hearty co-operation between minister and people alone can supply ; and further, a minister's standing in a community depends almost entirely on the place he holds among his own people. If he has their good word, their confidence, he will most likely have the good will and confidence of others. These are my reasons for saying that a congregation makes the minister.

Pastoral visitation is a very important part of the ministerial office here in the North of Ireland, and the good pastor is often more successful than the good preacher. It is not easy to get both together, because the good preacher must have time for study, and therefore cannot pay regular calls, while the good pastor, who is continually on the doorstep of the members of his flock, cannot do himself credit in the pulpit. So when your minister does call do not greet him with the words, "You are a great stranger." Such a salutation cuts both ways ; it may be a reproof to the minister, but, at the same time, the minister is never a stranger to the regular attender at Sunday worship. You can see him every Sunday. Let him see you are glad to see him when he calls, and make his visit as pleasant as you can, and his calls I have no doubt will be frequent and regular.

The minister of a small congregation knows every member of his flock personally, and will soon become acquainted with their needs and desires. When composing his sermon he will work out some point that he thinks will be a help to a particular individual, and find on Sunday that that person is not present. Some one else is there that the special reference does not apply to at all, and that some one goes away disappointed. It is not easy to preach a good sermon every Sunday, and it is impossible to select subjects that will appeal to every member at the same tine—hence arises the unfair criticism of the periodical worshipper. If there is nothing helpful in the address for you this Sunday there may be next. Remember that there are other people in the congregation: their needs, their desires must be catered for, and the thing that has no meaning for you might be the very thing that some one else is longing to hear. Come every Sunday, and you will not miss your turn. It is heartless work preparing a sermon for a congregation that do not attend. "The might-have-beens" make an uninspiring audience. Empty pews do not respond to eloquent pleading. Bare wood can not assimilate the high thoughts of God. The rain that falls on Friday is just the same rain as falls on Sunday. United worship is just as necessary for spiritual well-being as fair or market for material wants—"man shall not live by bread alone." The Saturday night's rain or the Sunday morning's cloud should not prevent you from coming to join in public thanksgiving to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. There is nothing keeps a minister up to the mark like a congregation anxious to attend his ministrations. So both for your spiritual welfare and the happiness of your minister I would appeal for regular attendance at Divine worship on the Sunday.

And now a word on *punctuality*. If it so happened that you were invited to pay your respects to King George on a certain day at a certain time, you would probably be waiting expectantly before the specified hour. Well, the hour for worship is an appointment with the King of kings, yet we often let Him wait for us. We are less eager in entering for the spiritual bread than we are of going home for the material bread. We find more time to discuss Church matters before going into church—even if the service has commenced—than we do after its close. And not only that, but in our usual order of service the prayer comes after the first hymn—the most important part of the service, and it is not uncommon to see people coming in after it is over. The minister is not there to pray *for* you, but to pray *with* you, to lead your thoughts to the throne of Grace. It is impossible for him to do that if you are on the road, or in the vestry ; and besides, late arrivals disturb the devotions of others. So as

well as pleading for regular attendance, I would plead for punctual attendance. And, finally, be not too exacting with your minister : his sermon preparation, Sunday duties, and pastoral visitation is not all that is required of him ; there is a vast deal of his work between him and the individual member, of which no account is taken. The ministerial office is not quite so easy as it looks, and he needs the sympathy and support of every member of his congregation if he is to do his best work, live his best life.

. . . . . .

And to you, my brother, I have no charge to give : your experience is wider, your term of office longer than mine. I would not presume to dictate how your life should be lived or your duties performed. I can only speak from my own short experience of things that help and hinder the minister in his work. The relation between him and his flock is unique : it differs from the relation between doctor and patient, lawyer and client : it is a family relation ; you become an adopted member of every family in the congregation, sharing their sorrows and their joys. That being so, it is a great help to a minister if he has a deaf ear and a blind eye—a deaf ear when the silly gossip or scandal is whispered to him in confidence, a blind eye so that he cannot see the unconscious mistakes and foibles of his friends. I suppose the most important duty of a minister is his pulpit ministrations. He must remember that nowadays his office is not so much to educate the intellect as to enrich the life of the soul. The pulpit is no place for a half-baked philosophy, nor abstruse speculations on theology, for while the preacher is wallowing through the maze of speculation—pleasing himself by quoting German scholars who agree with him—some poor hungry soul may be longing in vain for a simple word of hope and encouragement in the struggle of life. These abstract problems are all right for the study, but the successful preacher is the man that speaks from the heart to the heart, and when one does that the language is not complicated nor the thought obscure. The cultivation of the spiritual life, the enriching of the soul, the strengthening of faith, is what the pulpit stands for, and any teaching that has not this as its aim is extraneous and unnecessary. Again, a minister should be punctual ; his example has just as much weight as his precepts. If he commences his services punctually, keeps his appointments to the minute, and in all his transactions lets his word be his bond, thus will he make the affairs of his congregation run smoothly, and prevent much needless worry to himself and to others. Every profession has its difficulties, its awkward and unpleasant duties, and the ministry has its share ; but if the minister realises that he is there as the shepherd of souls —steward of a sacred trust under God —then he will be able to overcome these difficulties, and glory in the disagreeable tasks, because he will feel that he is fighting his Master's battle and earning the reward of "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And just before I close, let me emphasise the need of perfect trust and confidence between pastor and people. If a minister happens to have a fault-finding congregation then he is of all men most miserable, but if the union is what it ought to be, and what every minister should strive to make it, then there is no profession on earth so nobly useful, so highly honourable—an officer in the army of the living God, waging warfare in the forefront against every form of evil. Let me conclude by quoting a few words from Philips Brooks on the union between minister and congregation. He says, "It is a union which God joins together for purposes worthy of His care. When it is worthily realised, who can say that it may not stretch beyond the line of death, and they who have been minister and people to each other here be something holy and peculiar to each other in the city of God forever.

" How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves
By taking true for false, or false for true."
—*Tennyson.*

THE LATE REV. W. E. MELLONE.

WILLIAM EDWARD MELLONE was born at the village of Headington, about two and a half miles from Oxford, on November 15th, 1835. He was educated at the old Grammar School, at Thurne, and later at Cowley School, Oxford, between the years 1845 and 1853. In 1855 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, and was there one year or session. He did not matriculate.

In 1857 he entered King's College, London, where he studied till 1861, with the object of "taking orders" in the Church of England. It was here that he came under such diverse influences as those of Dr. Jelf and (John) Frederick Denison Maurice. Mr. Mellone did not, however, "take orders" in the English Church, but withdrew from her connection on theological grounds, and by the advice of the then Bishop of London, Dr. Tait, who heard from Mr. Mellone a statement of his views. After leaving King's College he was minister for about three years to a kind of Free Church, near Reading, now extinct, formed of seceders from the Church of England. It sprang into being on account of a fit of "no Popery," through the fright and dissent of some members within the Church. Mr. Mellone now emigrated to America, where he became minister of the Congregationalist Church at Creston, near Chicago. He was there for about two years, gradually more heterodox, until he joined the Unitarian denomination, his first Unitarian pulpit being at Toledo, Ohio, at which place he was minister in 1868-9. In 1871 he came to England, and became minister of the Unitarian Church in High Street, Portsmouth, where he remained about three years. Thence he removed in January, 1874, to Hamilton Road Church, Liverpool, remaining there another three years. In October, 1876, he commenced his ministry at Kidderminster. During his ministry a new chancel was built, the vestry was rebuilt and enlarged, a new organ was put in, the library was remodelled, and a young men's class held, two members of which (G. A. Payne and H. E. Haycock) subsequently entered the ministry. Mr. Mellone left Kidderminster in January, 1880, on account of a throat trouble, and went to "supply" for one year the pulpit of the Unitarian Church in Melbourne, Australia. Declining an unanimous invitation to remain, he returned to England in February, 1881, and settled at Devonport. At the end of three years he carried on the Unitarian Mission at Torquay for about six months. In 1885 he became minister at Bersels Green, Kent, and left it after rather over eight years to take up Church Extension work at Tunbridge Wells. He was there two years, and removed to Warrenpoint in September, 1896.

The above particulars (excepting the bracketed words) are extracted from the memoir, based on Mr. Mellone's own information, in Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans' "History New Meeting-House, Kidderminster," 1900, and will serve to supplement, and in some points correct, the obituary notice given last month. It may be added that Mr. Mellone's first visit to Ireland occurred in 1878, when he was present at the installation of Rev. James Kennedy, at Larne, and spoke at the evening meeting. A. G.

SUSTENTATION FUND.

The following corrections should be made in the Antrim list published in our last issue :—

Miss Smith	£1 to £2
Mrs. Semple	£3 to £1
Robert Gray, jun.	£3 to £2

The following should be added :—

Robert Gray, sen.	£1

GLENARM.

Alex. Morrow, Carnalbana ...	£0	5	0
Mrs. Robert Morrow, Carnalbana ...	0	5	0
Wm. Morrow, Kanestown ...	0	2	6
Alex. M'Mullan, Upper Carnalbana	0	2	6
Thomas M'Killop, Ballyraddy ...	0	2	6
Mrs. Hugh Montgomery, Straidkilty	0	2	6

Reports.

Antrim.—A most successful social and concert was held in the old Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Manse, Antrim, on Friday evening, 8th August. The young people of the congregation had

decorated the old building, so that its appearance was most attractive. An excellent tea was served to over a hundred guests at 7-30 o'clock, while a gramophone, kindly lent by Mr. Duckworth, gave lively selections. After tea there followed a very superior concert—talent every way worthy of a city audience, the following items being excellently rendered :—Duets by Miss Forbes and Mr. J. G. Entwistle ; songs by Miss Whiteside, songs by Rev. S. E. Bowen (Crumlin), songs by Miss Dougal, songs by Mr. Lindop, song by Mr. J. G. Entwistle, songs by Miss Forbes, and recitations by Mr. Hugh Hunter. The accompanist was Mr. C. Lindop, A.R.C.M. After the concert the young people cleared the rooms, and enjoyed themselves dancing till 12-30 o'clock, when one of the most successful and happy gatherings recently held in Antrim broke up.

* *

Ballyclare, Crumlin and Templepatrick.—On Saturday, 26th July, these three Sunday schools, with many members from each congregation, held conjointly, on the kind invitation of the Ballyclare friends, their annual fête. The place of meeting was the Old Manse, Ballyclare, and the afternoon was spent in the adjoining fields. All the requirements to the success of such an outing were met, and indeed in some respects more than fulfilled. The hospitality of the Ballyclare friends was beyond praise, and the day was one of the loveliest of this year. Only rarely in these islands dare we even hint that a day can be too fine, nor shall we do so on this occasion. Let us simply say that many members of the congregations concerned, who would otherwise have joined the excursion, remained at home to make hay while the sun shined ; and also that during the afternoon some few youngsters found it almost too warm to pursue with their accustomed zest those sports which are peculiar to the Sunday-school trip. On arrival, the friends from Crumlin and Templepatrick were invited to refreshment, and this invitation was again repeated towards evening, both repasts being of a very excellent and sustaining sort. The afternoon was spent playing the usual games, in which all took a hand, and all enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Before leaving, Rev. S. E. Bowen moved a vote of thanks to the Rev. P. Godding and the Ballyclare friends for their kind hospitality. This was seconded by Rev. A. Turner, and subsequently another vote of thanks to all concerned by Messrs. Forsythe and Scott brought a most happy excursion to an end.

* *

Clough.—The annual Sunday-school excursion took place on Saturday, July 26th. The members went by the 11-47 a.m. train from Tullymurry to Newcastle, where lunch was provided in the railway pavilion, after which the party drove along the beautiful shore road to Annalong in four long brakes and two cars of Mr. Porter's, Castlewellan, at which place a short stay was made, returning to Newcastle to tea in the pavilion, where games and other amusements were indulged in. All departed homewards by the 6-45 train. The music of the pipes and other instruments added considerably to the pleasure of the day. The weather was perfect, and the arrangements, which had been made by Messrs. D. G. M'Cammon and Hugh Donnan, Annsboro', were excellent. The excursion proved to be a success in every way.

* *

Kilwaughter.—The annual fête in connection with Kilwaughter Sunday School took place recently. The children and teachers assembled at 2-30 at the school, and, after the singing of a hymn and being addressed by their minister, Rev. J. Kennedy, marshalled by their teachers, a procession was formed, and a start was made for the field, headed by the Kilwaughter Flute Band. The place selected could not be surpassed in the neighbourhood, and the best thanks of all concerned are due to Mr. Bailie for continuing to grant the use of it every year. On arrival, tea, with its accompaniments, was dispensed by the teachers—the Misses Wallace, A. M. Wallace, Boyd, and Gingles, and Messrs. M'Keown, Nelson, and Esler. The usual games were then taken up. Towards evening

great numbers of friends and neighbours gathered. Dancing, etc., were heartily indulged in until ten o'clock, the afternoon and evening being so exceptionally fine that all were loth to depart. Mrs. S. M. Bailie, with her usual kindness, provided the children with abundance of sweets and lemonade during the evening, and, needless to say, the good things were much appreciated. After the National Anthem by the band, the company dispersed, tired but happy, having spent a particularly pleasant time.

Echoes.

Here are some figures that constitute a bitter problem of the day. When will arise a hero to solve the problem of armaments? During the past twenty-five years the expenditure on naval armaments of England and Germany has amounted to close on *a thousand million pounds*. The twenty-five years' naval expenditure (1889–1913) amounts to the stupendous total of £997,225,700. In the first year (1889–90) the two nations were content with a total of £18,509,055, equivalent to £355,943, every week. In 1913–14, however, their naval expenditure is very nearly four times as great, for the total is no less than £69,197,170, representing for the two nations an average outlay of £1,330,715 a week. Alongside these tremendous figures may we mention the fact that Parliament grants a little over twelve millions a year for education. "Thy Kingdom come" still proceeds from our lips, but if it only issued from everyone's heart! We still wax eloquent over the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. Well, the nations concerned are devoting (1913–14) £128,556,587 to their fleets—nearly two and a half millions sterling a week.

* *

Perhaps some of our readers take in the *Daily News and Leader*. The interests of our daily journals are very comprehensive nowadays, as the headings of two adjacent columns in a recent number of that particular journal will testify. The first column had it "What is Hell?" the next column "What is a Bath Bun?" But, apart from that, some very wonderful things have been written about that warm place than which there is no warmer. The correspondence has been going on for some few days now, and, as a sign of the times, it affords encouraging reading to Unitarians. We have always found a hell of eternal torment and an all-loving Father to be incompatible. Is it not healthy to read the following, having learnt that it proceeds from the pen of the Rev. C. Ensor Walters, of the Wesleyan Mission?—"I cannot find any doctrine of purgatory or chance of salvation after death in the New Testament," he writes, "but I do find in the New Testament the doctrine of the love of God. Holding that doctrine, I cannot believe that the loving God will do anything unjust; therefore, I am not at all concerned personally as to the future life. I am simply content in the belief that God is a loving Father, and will do all things well."

* *

"Till July 21st, 1813, the profession of Unitarianism was punishable in England by forfeiture of citizenship and by imprisonment, while in Scotland it was a capital crime. Charles James Fox (1749-1806), the Whig leader, had vainly endeavoured (1792) to procure the repeal of the persecuting Acts; this was accomplished by William Smith (1756-1835), M.P. for Norwich, the grandfather of Florence Nightingale (born 1820)."—*Alexander Gordon, M.A.*

* *

The legacies left by the late Mr. Frederick Nettlefold include £1,000 each to the B. and F.U. Association and the London District Unitarian Society, and £500 each to the Sunday School Association, the Blackfriars Mission, the Sustentation Fund, the Ministers' Benevolent Society, the Ministers' Pension and Insurance Fund, the Children's Convalescent Nursing Home, Winifred House, and the London Domestic Mission Society. He left estate valued at £343,009, and the duties payable are £41,000.

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